

Preliminary Amendment
PCT/IB2003/001160
Attorney Docket Q83894
September 28, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please delete the heading “CLAIMS” and insert the heading

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (New) A machine structure, in particular for a machine for handling fluid products, comprising:

- a loadbearing frame including uprights, and
- one or more covering panels,

the uprights (12) extending in a substantially vertical direction and having an upper end close to or onto which is secured a first substantially horizontal upper plate (14) for connecting the uprights (12), a second substantially horizontal lower plate (15) being secured to the same uprights (15) to connect them in a zone beneath the first upper plate (14) and thus form a zone for housing the mechanism of the machine (M), at least one of the covering panels (13, 13a) being removably fitted between two uprights (12) in a covering position to at least partly cover the housing zone laterally, the uprights (12) having longitudinal connection means (22, 24) for restraining said covering panels (13a, 13a), characterized in that said connection means (22, 24)

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are configured to support under restraint said side panels (13, 13a) and at the same time to impart to them a curvature with convexity away from the housing zone.

15. (New) A structure according to claim 14, characterized in that said connection means comprise longitudinal channel or hooks (22) provided on relative folded wings (21) defining lateral edges of said uprights (12), a panel (13, 13a) being hooked on facing longitudinal channel or hooks (22) of two adjacent uprights (12).

16. (New) A structure according to claim 14, characterized in that said connection means comprise a folded corner plate (24) placed between said horizontal plates (14, 15) and each uprights (12), each of said folded corner plates (24) acting together wings (25, 26) provided along the perimeter of each of said horizontal plates (14, 15) to define a stop for a relative panel (13, 13a) and, together said longitudinal channel or hooks (22) to impart said curvature with convexity away from the housing zone.

17. (New) A structure according to claim 14, characterized in that it comprises three uprights (12).

18. (New) A structure according to claim 14, characterized in that the second plate (15) is secured in a median zone of the uprights (12).

19. (New) A structure according to claim 18, characterized in that the covering panels (13, 13a) extend vertically over a distance which is substantially equal to the distance between the two plates (14, 15).

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20. (New) A structure according to claim 18, characterized in that at least one side panel (13a) extends over a length substantially equal to the height of the upright (12).

21. (New) A structure according to claim 1, characterized in that it has a frontal zone (16) for working access to the functions of the mechanisms of the machine (M) housed within the structure.

22. (New) A structure according to claim 21, characterized in that it has a working surface or support (17) provided in the front zone (16), mounted so that it can be drawn out or moved to disappear, or tilted.

23. (New) A structure according to claim 14, characterized in that the first upper plate (14) comprised a plurality of shaped openings (27) to house and support components of the machine (M).

24. (New) A structure according to claim 23, characterized in that it comprises a covering member (28, 45) located on the first upper plate (14) to at least partly cover one or more shaped openings (27).

25. (New) A structure according to claim 14, characterized in that it comprises bracing ties (30) which connect the uprights (12) together.

26. (New) An assembly kit for constructing a machine structure according to claim 14, the structure comprising:

- two or more elongated uprights (12),

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- at least two plates (14, 15) connecting the uprights (12), connecting members to secure the plates (14, 15) to the uprights (12) at a predetermined distance, and

- one or more side covering panels (13, 13a) each designed to be restrained between two uprights (12);

characterized in that said uprights (12) comprise connection means (22, 24) configured to support under restraint said side panels (13, 13a) and at the same time to impart to them a curvature with convexity away from the housing zone.

27. (New) A process for the assembly of a machine structure according to claim 14, comprising the stages of:

- mounting the first upper plate (14) close to one end of each upright (12),

- mounting the second plate (15) on uprights (12) at predetermined distance from the said of each upright (12),

- mounting the components of machine (M) in the housing zone formed between the first (14) and the second (15) plate, and

- mounting the side covering panels (13, 13a) each between two adjacent uprights (12),

characterized in that

each covering panel (13, 13a) is hooked on facing longitudinal channel or hooks (22) provided on a principal portion (19) of two adjacent uprights (12) in order to support under restraint each of said panels (13a, 13a) between said uprights (12) and at the same time impart to them a curvature with a convexity away from the housing zone.